

she's up in the sky

by womanning

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Summary: "Sarashina says Shuu is a caterpillar." nitorin/anna one-shot.

she's up in the sky

She's up in the sky

She's up in the domes

She's up in the sky, up in the dome

I knew a girl who came from Villa-Luz

Had a house filled with

Religious regret and infinite debt,

Heaven's pressure

She's a light in the dark

She's out of the door

She's up in the sky, up in the domes

Alabaster lover

You won't get more

We make each other

You won't get more

You won't get more

We make each other

You won't get more
She's up in the sky and the sky is on fire
She set the whole neighborhood to life
Then the people they'll read out all their names
Run away, run away, run away
And with victory the whole world will be ours
We will build nothing in it
Nothing in it
Alabaster lover
You won't get more
We could make other
You won't get more
Alabaster lover
You won't get more
We made each other
You won't get more
Alabaster lover

We made each other

Sarashina says Shuu is a caterpillar.

Right now, a boy"later a woman. Cocoon stage. Then a butterfly.
(Sarashina's words are, "A _beautiful _butterfly. Butterfly
beauty.")

The cocoon stage is a sex reassignment surgery. (Shuu says, "A gender
affirmation surgery.")

Sarashina, this long-legs-long-lashes girl, she's talking as she
perches in the window of the theater room. Loud, she doesn't have a
clue about how she_ speaks too much, says too much_, but she's
admirable and attractive and she's somebody. She's a somebody. Two
long, tan legs dangle from the window, the heels of her boots
click-click-clacking against the brick wall. It's too hot for boots.
It's too hot outside and I sweat and I love it, because it's
releasing everything, releasing what can be sparred, what I don't
need. Sweat is the vehicle that takes away the extra
loads.

Sarashina asks, "How do you become a god?"

Directed at me, but I don't know. I don't know how you become a

god.

"Maybe," she says, "it's like how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly."

"I was told," I say, "that the Indian god Ganesha was made from the dirt that covered the goddess Parvati so that she could have someone guard her while she bathed."

I take a second to remember.

"Her husband," I continue, "Shiva did not know of Parvati's new son and when he saw Ganesha laying eyes upon his wife, Shiva cut off the head of Ganesha."

"Oh?" Sarashina says, perking up, eyebrows going wild. "Oh?"

Shuu touches her short hair. She wipes sweat from her nose.

"Well â€¦ Well, obviously Parvati was mad."

Shuu is mentally somewhere else.

"Shiva was then sent to earth to cut off the head of the first creature he saw. It was an elephantâ€"Ganesha has an elephant head.

And Shiva made Ganesha a god."

I pause.

"That doesn't remind me of a caterpillar and a butterfly."

Sarashina scratches her stomach; she rolls her eyes to the sky as if she's searching for the gods. Look, lookâ€"she'll find nothing, I've tried. "It does to me," she says.

Finally, Shuu returns to us. "The caterpillar/butterfly metaphor is old and overused," she states. "I want to eat. Anna-chan and I are supposed to be eating right now."

"We're supposed to be sharing a plate of nachos," I say.

"Yes. Yes, nachos should be in front of us right now."

"With chicken."

"You're hurting my stomach. I'm _dy_ing."

Sarashina shifts in the window and glances inside where the drama kids rehearse sword fights. "You're right. Maybe you're like a gorgeous Ganesha."

"No, I'm just a normal Nitori." Shuu grabs my arm and gives Sarashina a comical salute in goodbye. We inch towards the parking lot. Her hands, they're sweaty too. Warm.

"What if you're head was replaced with a butterfly?" Sarashina calls after us. "Ironically, even uglier than having an elephant's!"

"Come _on_, Anna."

Shuu and I reach the school's parking lot. Near the middle an old car with chipping green paint sits in its place like a dead beetle that suffered its death a lifetime ago. Near it we find my own car: shining, new, mine. I unlock the car with my key and open the door for Shuu. Mom would be unimpressed and would mutter something about how the boy should open the door for the girlâ€"polite, orderlyâ€"but it's a stupid notion and Shuu isn't a boy really, not really.

A navy blue dress with a pattern of white anchors lays out on one of the back seats, a peter-pan collar with a skirt that's a bright color of solid turquoise on the other. A wig. No shoes. My shoes never fit her feet.

"Really," I say, "I don't know if my clothes will fit you anymore. We're getting old."

"This feels nostalgic," she says, peering in the back. Her gaze always lingers so long when it comes to the world of women.

"It is nostalgic," I agree, my voice surprisingly soft.

And then, "Even more so if it was my mom taking us."

"She thought I was a girl back then."

"She still thinks you're a girl."

"Only because she hasn't seen me since years school."

"But you _are _a girl soâ€" . Well, I don't know what to say. "So it doesn't matter."

We drive along the road in silence with the exception of a gulp, with the exception of a sigh. I flip on the radio. It's loud. I reach to turn the volume down, but instead I turn it off again. The heat is becoming uncomfortable, the sweat is increasing.

"I wantâ€" "

Shuu, whose chin had been resting on her palm, whose elbow had been resting on the car window, straightens up. "You want?"

We're paused at a stoplight. "I want a change of plans."

She eyes meâ€"I can tell how her face falls than she's disappointedâ€"devastated? This is a day where she can be who she is. She thinks I'm taking it away from her.

I'm not.

"I want to have a funeral," I say and Shuu doesn't get it. And no matter what expression I give her she's not going to get it without an explanation. "You're parents aren't home?"

"No," she says, "No, but my sister is and I don't know what you're getting at."

"Your sister knows about â€" you, though."

"Yes."

Shuu is quiet, accepting.

I stir the car in the direction of the Nitori householdâ€"an apartment, white and average. Someday, I think, I'd like a house blue like little eggs with an American Dream-esque white picket fence and a green lawn littered with hydrangea bushes. Maybe in Paris.

(Maybe with Shuu.)

An older girl with a brown bob, a girl who is lovely if not frowning follows us with her almond-shaped eyes. I wonder how Maho feels about her best friend and her sister. Is it still the same as always?

Maho doesn't say anything. She is sitting on the front steps, reading a magazine, her body reclined on the railing that glistens in the sun. She ignores us. There was once a time when she would never shut up. But we've gotten older and everyone has changed and we are not the child versions of ourselves anymore.

It is not my house yet I'm the one who leads Shuu behind the building. The "backyard" is as mundane as the front. I heard Shuu's mother used to garden before they moved here. Now she fills her time with soap operas. I also heard that Nitori-san has always been distant. Shuu said her mother has stopped looking at her.

"Am I allowed to ask what we're doing now?"

I say, "You were always allowed."

I pick a spot in the corner of the backyardâ€"it's moist from rain and guarded by bushes. It's more soil than grass here. I get on my knees.

I start to dig.

"A funeral," Shuu says.

"A funeral," I repeat.

"For who?"

"For what," I say. "For â€| who, too. I suppose."

The hole is deep enough.

"Reach in my left pocket," I command to Shuu. "There you'll find Ganesha."

"You keep a god in your pocket?" she asks, bending down and doing as she's told, dipping her hand into my shorts and fishing out a miniature statue of Ganesha, the elephant-headed god.

"A token. My dad got it for me when he traveled to India. I always have it with me." I finger one of my earrings nervously and soon recoil remembering the dirtiness of my hands. Shuu examines the statue and then places it in my palm. "It's time to let go. I have to find my own path. It's sort of a metaphor, all this."

She blinks. "Have you always talked like this? You have, haven't you? You have." She smilesâ€"Shuu has the meekest of smiles.

"Shuu, I'm burying the expectations that my family have for me. I'm burying their path for me. Goodbye, Ganesha." I drop the little elephant man into the hole and I lick my lips, turning back to Shuu. "Let go of him, Shuu. Let him go."

She understands. But: "I don't know how."

"Come on. Let him go."

She remains still for a moment, she lowers her head and breathes in and out, in and out and then stands up and walks away. She walks back into the building and I stare at the place she was occupying seconds before.

When she returns I'm still staring.

When she returns she has on the anchor dress and the wig and there's makeup on her face. Her bare toes squeeze at the grass beneath her feet. She steps over me sits by the hole. She bends over and places her head slightly above it.

She lets him go with a voice: "Shuuichi."

And then the life of her as a boy is gone and she's just Nitori. There is no more of the boy named Shuuichi stored in the back of her brain. There's no more disguise. He's gone forever, he's dead.

Wiping her lips though nothing taints them, she takes a long look at me and then we begin to throw the dirt upon Ganesha and Shuuichi.

"Shuuichi is now on Mars," she says, patting down the grave. "When I die, I will go to Venus. We'll never see each other again."

"When I die I'll rot in the ground while Ganesha parties in Heaven."

We both laugh.

"I don't think I need a gender affirmation surgery to become a butterfly like Sarashina said." Shuu rocks back and forth on her heels. "I think that just happened. I just became a butterfly."

"If you're okay with Sarashina's cheesy metaphors then yesâ€"yes, I guess so," I respond, resting my hands on my thighs.

"I'm not okay with her metaphorsâ€"that's why I'm correcting them. Just because I'm transgender doesn't mean I necessarily feel the need to get surgery. I do want one, I want to be like Yuki, but that's not always the case for others."

"I'm going to quit modeling, maybe. It was always my parent's plan for me, this life I have right now."

"I'm going to let my parents see me like this."

I am tracin in the dirt. "I think we just have to let ourselves be now. We have to _be_."

"I agree. We have to be. So, goodbye, Shuuichi."

I wipe the sweat from my forehead.

"And goodbye, expectations."

End
file.